

THE

INDYPENDENT

IRAQ DIARY

BY JO WILDING

DIALLA, MARCH 25—It's hard now to tell the bombings from the storm: both beat at the windows and thunder through the city, but after a missile explodes, flocks of birds fill the sky, disturbed by the shock waves. After a gust, they are replaced by a cornucopia of rubbish, drifting in the smog of sand and dust and smoke which has turned the air a dirty orange so thick it blotted out the sun and everything went dark in the middle of the day. Even the rain was filthy: the cleansing, healing drops fill with grime on the way down and splatter you with streaks of mud.

In the end three people died yesterday in the farmhouse that was bombed at Diaila, including the young wife, Nahda, who was missing in the rubble. She, along with Zahra, the eight-year-old daughter and her aunt, Hana, were buried this morning. People are taken for burial in coffins but are buried in shrouds and a pickup returned to the remains of the house with the three caskets, cobbled out of small pieces of wood, riding in the back.

The couple had been married just one week. A neighbor showed us a flouncy pink invitation to the wedding festival. Omar, the bridegroom, sat silently crying on the floor in the hospital corridor, leaning on the wall, body bent, head in his hands.

Neighbors said the bomb hit at 4 p.m. yesterday. The plane had been flying overhead for a while, they said, when it fired three rockets, one of which demolished the entire upper story of the house. It looked as if it had only ever been a bungalow until, clambering through the hallway, we came to the stairs, leading up to nothing.

Small farmhouses sat between cultivated fields, the occasional cow, two or three compact plots, then another building. A couple of sheep held court over the empty marketplace as we entered the village, over the small Diaila Bridge across a slim branch of the Tigris. There was nothing which could explain the attack: nothing which even looked like a target that, perhaps, the pilot might have been aiming for. It made no sense. The villagers said the plane had been circling overhead. Its pilot must have seen what was there.

The animal shelters behind the house were crumpled, the family's cow lying crushed under her roof. They wouldn't have known that yet, still in the hospital. The windows of 16 houses nearby were all broken, the neighbors told us, and the blast made the children's ears bleed.

Ration sacks were piled in the kitchen and there was a bowl of green beans, which looked as if they were being prepared for an evening meal. Two or three of the neighbors invited us to eat in their homes. Humbling seems too small a word for the experience of being invited to share food and hospitality, by people with so little, while crouching in the rubble of their friends' and neighbors' home which was obliterated, with several lives, by my country, only the previous day.

Hours earlier, in the Al Kindi hospital, we had gone to take a statement from another casualty. He was dying, his family around him, so we didn't go into the room. As we walked away one of the men came after us with a tin of sweets to offer us. "Thank you for coming," he said in English. These people constantly overwhelm me with their dignity, their kindness, their gentle grace and warmth.

THE SPOILS OF WAR

Iraq's Ancient Cultural Legacy In Peril

"President Bush hasn't shown that this war is necessary. He has shown that this war is for the U.S. to have the oil."

—Fernando Suarez de Solar, father of 20-year-old U.S. Marine Jesus Suarez de Solar, who died in Iraq last month.



Marine:
"I refuse to fight old men's wars."
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The Republic of FEAR



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CUNY STUDENTS PAY FOR WAR
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What is the IMC?

With autonomous chapters in more than 100 cities throughout the world, the three-year-old Independent Media Center has become an international network of volunteer media activists.

The IMC seeks to create a new media ethic by providing progressive, in-depth and accurate coverage of issues. We are a community-based organization using media to facilitate political and cultural self-representation. We seek to illuminate and analyze issues impacting individuals, communities and eco-systems by providing media tools and space to those seeking to communicate.

Unlike corporate media, we espouse open dialogue, and the importance of placing the means of communication and creativity back in the hands of the people, away from the drive of profit.

The Independent is funded by benefits, subscriptions, donations, grants, and ads from organizations and individuals with similar missions. All reporting is done by NYC IMC volunteers unless otherwise noted.

What can I do to get involved?

The IMC has an open door. You can write for *The Independent*, film events and rallies, self-publish articles to the web, take photos or just help us run the office. As an organization relying entirely on volunteer support, we encourage all forms of participation.

The print team reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity. We welcome your participation in the entire editorial process.

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U.S. TAKES AIM AT UNEMBEDDED JOURNALISTS

The U.S. says it is fighting in Iraq for (among other reasons) democratic freedoms. Yet, the freedom of the press to tell stories that fall outside the official U.S. line is becoming increasingly difficult. Here are just a few of the troubling incidents of outright censorship.

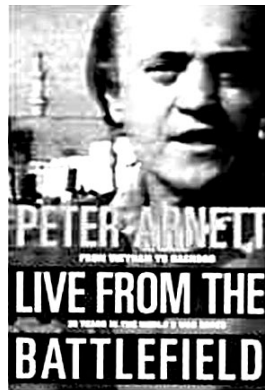
BY IMC STAFF

March 26—"Don't mess with my soldiers. Don't mess with them because they are trained like dogs to kill. And they will kill you if you try again," an American lieutenant told Dan Scemana and three other roving reporters after they were arrested 100 miles south of Baghdad. Scemana, an Israeli, describes the ordeal that followed as "the worst 48 hours in our lives." Luis Castro and Victor Silva of RTP Television in Portugal were both beaten and Castro sustained broken ribs.

March 27—Philip Smucker, an unembedded reporter traveling with the 1st Marine Division, was kicked out of southern Iraq for allegedly divulging sensitive information during a live CNN appearance.

However, Smucker's boss disagrees. "We have read the transcript of the CNN interview and it does not appear to us that he disclosed anything that wasn't already widely available," said his *Christian Science Monitor* editor.

March 31—NBC fires Peter Arnett a day after he tells an Iraqi television interviewer that U.S. war plans are going badly. Arnett, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of the Vietnam War, was also harshly criticized during the 1991 Gulf War for reporting on CNN that a U.S. missile strike had wiped out a baby milk factory that the Pentagon claimed was a chemical weapons plant.



A day after his sacking by NBC, Arnett was hired by the *Daily Mirror* ("Fired by America for telling the truth" trumpeted the April 1 front-page headline) a British tabloid whose readers presumably won't be as averse to hearing bad news about the war.

March 25—Iraqi state television was hit with a missile strike two days after it ran footage of captured American POWs.

"Once again, we see military and political commanders from the democratic world targeting a television network simply because they don't like the message it gives out," said Aidan White, general secretary of the International Federation of Journalists.

The U.S. attack may have violated international law in targeting these facilities, which are protected by the Geneva Conventions and cannot be targeted unless they are used for military purposes. The Pentagon previously bombed an Al-Jazeera station in Kabul in November 2001 and Serbian state television during the 1999 Kosovo War.

March 25—Al Jazeera reporters are banned from the New York Stock Exchange after the Arab satellite news network shows picture of dead American GIs. NASDAQ follows suit later in the week. A Stock Exchange spokesperson says that credentials were only provided to networks that provide "responsible" coverage.

15 STORIES THAT WEREN'T

BY IMC STAFF

Much ink has been spilled regarding the Pentagon's latest media strategy: the tactic of "embedding" journalists with American and British military units.

While there can be little doubt that the "embedding" process has provided the Western world with some spectacular sights and sounds, much of the information coming from the front lines has been inaccurate or downright wrong. What's more, some of the information has been deliberately designed to portray the war in a light favorable to the American cause.

According to Greg Mitchell with *Editor & Publisher*, "the war is only a week old and already the media has gotten at least 15 stories wrong or misreported a sliver of fact into a major event. Television news programs, of course, have been the prime culprits."

Here is Mitchell's list of stories that have been widely misreported or poorly reported so far:

1. Saddam may well have been killed in the first night's surprise attack (March 20).
2. Even if he wasn't killed, Iraqi command and control was no doubt "decapitated" (March 22).
3. Umm Qasr has been taken (March 22).
4. Most Iraqi soldiers will not fight for Saddam and instead are surrendering in droves (March 22).
5. Iraqi citizens are greeting Americans as liberators (March 22).
6. An entire division of 8,000 Iraqi soldiers surrendered en masse near Basra (March 23).
7. Several Scud missiles, banned weapons, have been launched against U.S. forces in Kuwait (March 23).
8. Saddam's Fedayeen militia are few in number and do not pose a serious threat (March 23).
9. Basra has been taken (March 23).
10. Umm Qasr has been taken (March 23).
11. A captured chemical plant likely produced chemical weapons (March 23).
12. Nassiriya has been taken (March 23).
13. Umm Qasr has been taken (March 24).
14. The Iraqi government faces a "major rebellion" of anti-Saddam citizens in Basra (March 24).
15. A convoy of 1,000 Iraqi vehicles and Republican Guards are speeding south from Baghdad to engage U.S. troops (March 25).

Source: Editor & Publisher Online



LEADING HAWKS PAVE WAY FOR BECHTEL

BY MIKE BURKE

"It has nothing to do with oil, literally nothing to do with oil." Those were the words of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld explaining why the United States was preparing to launch a pre-emptive attack on Iraq.

That was November 15, 2002.

Flash back 19 years to December 20, 1983. The setting is Baghdad. President Reagan's special envoy is meeting a certain Saddam Hussein and his deputy Tariq Aziz. The discussion centers on one topic: oil. The envoy's name is Donald Rumsfeld.

Let's read Rumsfeld's notes from the meeting with Aziz:

"I noted that Iraq's oil exports were important... I raised the question of a pipeline through Jordan. He said he was familiar with the proposal. It apparently was a U.S. company's proposal." The U.S. company was Bechtel. The San Francisco-based firm wanted to build a pipeline from Iraq to Jordan. The deal would eventually fall apart, and with it U.S.-Iraqi relations.

Today Bechtel stands to profit immensely in the rebuilding of Iraq as soon as the Rumsfeld-led military finishes waging its attack on the country. Bechtel was one of five U.S. companies – Vice President Dick Cheney's former company Halliburton was another – to be quietly invited by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to bid on a contract to rebuild Iraq that could eventually top \$100 billion.

As *The Independent* went to press, the list of prospective contractors was narrowed to two including Bechtel.

Let's go back 20 years: The Iraq-Iran war is in full swing. Reagan and Bush (the first) are in the White House. The Secretary of State is George Shultz, a former CEO of Bechtel. Iraq has already begun gassing Iranian troops with chemical agents.

On December 2, 1983, the U.S. State Department invited Bechtel to discuss

building an oil pipeline from Iraq to the Gulf of Aqaba, Jordan.

Within three weeks special envoy Rumsfeld was in Baghdad. Declassified notes indicate Rumsfeld told Hussein, "The U.S. looks with favor on other means, such as the expansion of Iraqi pipeline capabilities through Saudi Arabia and possibly elsewhere [to] redress the Iran-Iraq oil export imbalance."

Rumsfeld would return on March 26, 1984. On the same day he met with Aziz to discuss the pipeline, the United Nations issued its first report condemning Iraq's use of chemical weapons.

Iraq's use of chemical agents against Iran was no secret to Washington. Unclassified documents reveal that a U.S. diplomat met with an Iraqi counterpart on April 6, 1984 to discuss, among other things, the Bechtel pipeline and chemical weapons. The diplomat, James Placke, did not instruct Iraq to stop using chemical weapons, he only asked Iraq not to "embarrass" the Reagan administration by purchasing weapons from U.S. suppliers. (It should be noted that Bechtel also played a role in Iraq's development of chemical weapons. Iraqi documents turned over to the United Nations a few months ago listed Bechtel as one of 23 U.S. companies that helped Iraq build its arsenal of weapons of mass destruction during the 1980s.)

Meanwhile in Washington, Secretary of State Shultz was quietly pressuring the U.S. Export-Import Bank and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation to provide aid to Iraq and to his former company, Bechtel.

Iraq however, was still hesitant to OK the Bechtel project because of fears Israel would target the oil pipeline. Over the next two years, countless hours of questionable negotiations occurred, involving a cast of characters, including Attorney General Edwin Meese III, former CIA Director and Defense Secretary James Schlesinger,



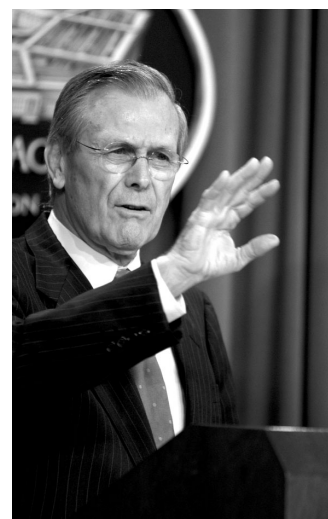
1983: U.S. special envoy Donald Rumsfeld meets with Saddam Hussein to talk business.

National Security Advisor Robert "Bud" McFarlane, National Security Advisor Roger Robinson and Judge William B. Clark (who simultaneously represented Bechtel and the Reagan administration during negotiations with Iraq).

Despite the intense negotiations, the Iraqis eventually rejected the pipeline proposal. U.S.-Iraq relations never recovered. Many of the officials who backed the pipeline proposal transformed into hawks calling for war on Iraq.

In February 1998, Clark, Robinson and McFarlane joined future members of the Bush/Cheney cabal such as Rumsfeld, Richard Perle, Elliot Abrams, Richard Armitage and Paul Wolfowitz in writing an open letter to President Clinton urging him to rid the world of Saddam Hussein. And last year Shultz helped form the pro-invasion Committee for the Liberation of Iraq.

"The men who courted Saddam while he gassed Iranians are now waging war against him, ostensibly because he holds these same weapons of mass destruction" said Jim Vallette, lead author of a new report on the Bechtel pipeline by the Sustainable Energy and Economy Network and Institute for Policy Studies. "To a man, they now deny that oil has anything to do with the conflict. Yet during the Reagan Administration, and in the years leading up to the present conflict, these men shaped and implemented a strategy that had everything to do with securing Iraqi oil exports."



2003: Rumsfeld says "It's not about the oil." Tell that to the U.S. soldiers at "Forward Operating Bases Exxon and Shell."



CASHING IN ON IRAQ

BY VANESSA HRADSKY

Even before the war started, the Bush administration was busy looking for candidates for the post-war reconstruction of Iraq. With the contracts valued at \$25 to \$100 billion (paid for by your tax dollars), it's not surprising that companies are fighting for them, nor that most of the contenders either have ties to the administration or contributed heavily to Bush's 2000 presidential campaign.

The main contract, for capital construction, could be worth \$600 to \$900 million in the first year alone. Halliburton (previously run by Vice President Dick Cheney), Bechtel (whose board includes two former Republican cabinet officers), Fluor (which has ties to several former government officials), the Parsons Corporation, the Louis Berger Group and Washington Group International are all bidding for it.

Contracts already awarded:

February 21, 2003: \$7.1 million contract for Personnel Support awarded to the Washington D.C.-based International Resources Group, a private merce-

nary company

March 24, 2003: \$4.8 million contract for Seaport Administration of the port of Umm Qasr awarded to Seattle-based Stevedoring Services of America (SSA), the largest marine terminal operator in the country. SSA is a notorious anti-union company that has led efforts to break longshore unions around the world and was largely blamed for the West Coast longshore workers port lockout in the fall of 2002.

In the late 1990s, SSA tried to break the Australian dock unions. SSA also pressured the government of Bangladesh to open a private port that would replace a government-owned port and its unionized workforce. Although supported by the U.S. ambassador to Bangladesh, SSA's proposal was ruled illegal by Bangladesh's High Court in November 2002.

March 25, 2003: \$489 million (estimated) contract for oil infrastructure repair awarded to Halliburton's Kellogg Brown & Root unit. Cheney was CEO of Halliburton from 1995 to 2000, and after the U.N.

relaxed sanctions on Iraq in 1998, two Halliburton subsidiaries did \$24 million worth of business with Saddam Hussein to repair war damage and get Iraq's oil pipes working again.

In 1995, Halliburton pleaded guilty to violating the U.S. ban on exports to Libya, after peddling six pulse nuclear generators to Moammar Gadhafi that could be used to detonate nuclear weapons. Under Cheney, Halliburton continued to do business with "rogue nations" such as Libya, Iran and Iraq.

Halliburton also overbilled the Pentagon on contracts over a 4-year period ending in 1998 – like charging \$750,000 for electrical repairs at Fort Ord, CA that cost only \$125,000 – and ultimately settled with the Army to pay a two-million-dollar fine.

And in 1998, Halliburton and its auditor Arthur Andersen cooked the books to postpone losses from deadbeat clients to artificially inflate Halliburton's profits by about \$100 million, a maneuver still under investigation by the Securities and Exchange Commission.

STALINGRAD ON THE TIGRIS

BY SANJAY KUMAR

"The Iraqis are sick people and we are the chemotherapy. I am starting to hate this country. Wait until I get hold of a friggin' Iraqi. No, I won't get hold of one. I'll just kill him."

So progresses "Operation Iraqi Freedom," in the words of U.S. Marine Cpl. Ryan Dupre. He was talking to Mark Franchetti of *The Sunday Times* of London, who was reporting from the grinding siege of An Nassiriyah enforced by "young American Marines with orders to shoot anything that moved."

At the "Bridge of Death," Franchetti recorded on March 30 the death of a dozen Iraqi civilians trying to flee the surrounded city and unfortunate enough to encounter the trigger-happy Marines. The massacre preceded others: one at Najaf where U.S. Army troops mowed down seven women and children in a car trying to flee the chaos and another near Hilla where a dozen members of a family died when their truck was blown apart by a rocket fired from an Apache helicopter.

"It wasn't supposed to be like this," editorialized *The New York Times*.

Shock and awe would end the war in "days or weeks." Instead, the invasion has quickly devolved into a grinding war of attrition.

In a remarkable admission, the U.S. Army's senior ground commander in Iraq, Lt. General William Wallace, told *The Washington Post*, "The enemy we're fighting is different from the one we'd war-gamed against."

That enemy wasn't supposed to include suicide bombers — despite the much-publicized Pentagon war game last year that saw the Iraqi player using such unconventional methods to inflict thousands of U.S. deaths even before they could fire a shot.

To Rumsfeld & Co., the Iraqis would be the new French, erupting in revolt at the mere sight of Americans. Instead, the Iraqis are the new Palestinians. The specter of

human bombs has turned every civilian into a potential threat. Soldiers at checkpoints have put up signs warning drivers, "Stop here or you will be killed."

Embedded reporters have noted the swift change from troops meeting Iraqis with handshakes to now keeping "guns trained on all civilians and their vehicles," and treating Iraqis "as hostile until proven otherwise."

To guard against attacks by "irregulars," the occupying troops are ringing Iraq cities with steel and clamping down on traffic either in or out and on surrounding roads. The shift may make sense tactically, but starving, besieging and shooting civilians is hardly the way to win their hearts and minds as an earlier generation of grunts



CIVILIANS AT A CHECKPOINT IN BASRA: "People see this as an occupation. If the government gives us weapons we will fight the Americans and the British," one local man said.

learned in Vietnam. When you treat the civilian population as the enemy, they will become the enemy.

**"We are all Palestinians now."
- a taxi driver in Jordan**

And sieges take time, Bush's most potent nemesis. Unless a quick coup de grace can be delivered to Hussein, the Arab nation will be increasingly inflamed. U.S. Senators briefed last week by the CIA on the increasingly radicalized Arab street were said to have left the meeting "ashen-faced." Jordan and Egypt, two key U.S. allies, were singled out at being at risk of a popular revolt.

Observers are calling the U.S. campaign the "Palestinization" of Iraq. Writing from Amman, reporter Pepe Escobar notes:

"One of the most extraordinary developments of the war so far is how the resistance of the Iraqi population against a foreign invasion has galvanized this sentiment of anger in the Arab world. 'We are all Palestinians now,' as a Bedouin taxi driver

puts it. One of the first things anyone mentions in Jordan — be it a Jordanian, an Egyptian, a Lebanese or a Somali refugee — is their happiness about the way the Iraqi people are resisting the 'invaders' (never qualified as 'liberators'). Their intuition also tells them that every extra day in this war is further humiliation to the Pentagon — especially because the real war, and not the U.S. version, is being followed by the whole Arab world, in Arabic, through Arab satellite channels."

In Qatar, Centcom briefers know they are losing the propaganda war. They can't explain away the pictures of burned and maimed civilians. Nonetheless, they continue to emit bravado, saying air strikes are grinding down Republican Guard units and that thousands of militia members have been killed in urban fighting in the south.

There is no independent confirmation, however. During the 1999 Kosovo war, NATO claimed that 90 percent of the Serbian army's heavy armor was wrecked. When Serbia finally caved in — because its civilian infrastructure was being decimated — it turned out less than 10 percent its tanks had been destroyed. They used camouflage and decoys, and have passed on their lessons to the Iraqis. One military analyst at the Brookings Institution questions the claim that "50 percent" of Republican Guard units have been destroyed, suggesting the actual kill rate is one-tenth of that.

In Afghanistan, the U.S. would assert that hundreds of enemy forces were killed and captured. Yet, the body counts would be steadily downgraded daily, just like in Iraq.

Perhaps the only shock is the war planners' hubris, reminiscent of the "Best and the Brightest" who were convinced — despite all evidence — they would prevail in Vietnam. Saddam Hussein's regime was supposed to be fragile, and it never entered the minds of the war planners that he may have spent the last 12 years preparing for the final showdown.

Satellite jammers and oil fires are being used to disorient smart munitions. Irregular forces are adopting tactics used in Somalia: dressing as civilians, hiding among the populace and mounting weapons on trucks. In one encounter, 30 of 32 Apache helicopters were damaged and driven-off by small-arms fire. The militias reportedly took a play from the Palestinians by using cell phones to coordinate the assault. And Iraqi generals are emulating the Pentagon, appearing all over the airwaves with their own carefully crafted message du jour.

Hussein may even be looking back to World War II. As head of a brutal regime, Stalin rallied the people in defense of "Mother Russia," not the Communist Party. Hussein has used a similar approach, mixing nationalism with religion to motivate Iraqis to fight the "invaders" and "crusaders." His best recruiter, however, has been the U.S. bombing of civilians, with over 5,000 killed and wounded by Iraqi accounts.

For those troops reluctant to fight for a despot, Iraqi execution squads are on hand to provide the necessary motivation; a nasty, but effective tactic used by the Soviets in the Stalingrad meat grinder.

In Baghdad, the forces are much more loyal to the regime and number more than 100,000. The "Mother of All Battles" for regime change is looming as the Pentagon indicates it doesn't want to wait for reinforcements to push on to the capital as temperatures are soaring. The question is which regime will topple first: The one in Baghdad, Cairo, Amman or Washington?

POW DOUBLETALK

Suddenly, the government of the United States has discovered the virtues of international law. It may be waging an illegal war against a sovereign state; it may be seeking to destroy every treaty which impedes its attempts to run the world, but when five of its captured soldiers were paraded in front of the Iraqi television cameras, Donald Rumsfeld immediately complained that "it is against the Geneva convention to show photographs of prisoners of war in a manner that is humiliating for them."

He is, of course, quite right. Article 13 of the third convention, concerning the treatment of prisoners, insists that they "must at all times be protected... against insults and public curiosity."

This being so, Rumsfeld had better watch his back.

His prison camp in Guantanamo Bay, in Cuba, where 641 men are held, breaches no fewer than 15 articles of the third convention. The U.S. government broke the first of these (article 13) as soon as the prisoners arrived, by displaying them, just as the Iraqis have done, on television. In breach of article 18, they had been stripped of their own clothes and deprived of their possessions. They were then interned in a penitentiary (against article



OURS: An American POW is interviewed on Iraqi television.

22), where they were denied proper mess facilities (26), canteens (28), religious premises (34), opportunities for physical exercise (38), access to the text of the convention (41), freedom to write to their families (70 and 71) and parcels of food and books (72). ...

George Monbiot
Tuesday March 25, 2003
The London Guardian



THEIRS: "Unlawful Combatants" allegedly from al Qaeda being transported to the legal black hole at Camp X-Ray in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.



MUHAMMED ADNAN (Left): Received cuts to his head and face from shrapnel. **NADA ADNAN** (Above): Recovers from a shrapnel wound to her right cranium in Baghdad's Al Kindi hospital. PHOTO IRAQI PEACE TEAM

THE REAL FACE OF WAR

BY ROBERT FISK

BAGHDAD, MARCH 30—The piece of metal is only a foot high, but the numbers on it hold the clue to the latest atrocity in Baghdad.

At least 62 civilians had died by yesterday afternoon, and the coding on that hunk of metal contains the identity of the culprit. The Americans and British were doing their best yesterday to suggest that an Iraqi anti-aircraft missile destroyed those dozens of lives, adding that they were "still investigating" the carnage. But the coding is in Western style, not in Arabic. And many of the survivors heard the plane.

In the Al-Noor hospital yesterday morning, there were appalling scenes of pain and suffering. A 2-year-old girl, Saida Jaffar, swaddled in bandages, a tube into her nose, another into her stomach. All I could see of her was her forehead, two small eyes and a chin. Beside her, blood and flies covered a heap of old bandages and swabs. Not far away, lying on a dirty bed, was 3-year-old Mohamed Amaid, his face, stomach, hands and feet all tied tightly in bandages. A great black mass of congealed blood lay at the bottom of his bed.

This is a hospital without computers, with only the most primitive of X-ray

machines. But the missile was guided by computers and that vital shard of fuselage was computer-coded. It can be easily verified and checked by the Americans – if they choose to do so. It reads: 30003-704ASB 7492. The letter "B" is scratched and could be an "H." This is believed to be the serial number. It is followed by a further code which arms manufacturers usually refer to as the weapon's "Lot" number. It reads: MFR 96214 09.

The piece of metal bearing the codings was retrieved only minutes after the missile exploded on Friday evening, by an old man whose home is only 100 yards from the six ft crater. Even the Iraqi authorities do not know that it exists. The missile sprayed hunks of metal through the crowds – mainly women and children – and through the cheap brick walls of local homes, amputating limbs and heads. Three brothers, the eldest 21 and the youngest 12, for example, were cut down inside the living room of their brick hut on the main road opposite the market. Two doors away, two sisters were killed in an identical manner.

"We have never seen anything like these wounds before," Dr Ahmed, an anaesthetist at the Al-Noor hospital told me later. "These people have been pun-

ctured by dozens of bits of metal." He was right. One old man I visited in a hospital ward had 24 holes in the back of his legs and buttocks, some as big as pound coins. An X-ray photograph handed to me by one of his doctors clearly showed at least 35 slivers of metal still embedded in his body.

Like the Sha'ab highway massacre on Thursday – when at least 21 Iraqi civilians were killed or burned to death by two missiles fired by an American jet – Shu'ale is a poor, Shia Muslim neighborhood of single-story corrugated iron and cement food stores and two-room brick homes. These are the very people whom Messrs Bush and Blair expected to rise in insurrection against Saddam. But the anger in the slums was directed at the Americans and British yesterday, by old women and bereaved fathers and brothers who spoke without hesitation – and without the presence of the otherwise ubiquitous government "minders."

"This is a crime," a woman muttered at me angrily. "Yes, I know they say they are targeting the military. But can you see soldiers here? Can you see missiles?"

Excerpted from
The Independent (UK)

SHOCKING AND AWFUL

Origins of a Military Doctrine

BY CATRIONA STUART

Minutes after the first bombs fell on Iraq, "shock and awe" became the latest buzzword on every television news report. First aired by CBS in late January, shock and awe described an emerging battle plan for Iraq; rising quickly from a few dozen on-air television mentions in February, to more than 600 in the early days of the war.

Horrificing some human rights advocates and exciting war-hungry hawks, the term is only one part of a coordinated public relations campaign that has sought to obscure controversial issues with marketing-friendly catch-phrases; lathering the media with such terms as Operation Iraqi Freedom, MOAB (Mother of All Bombs), and the "Coalition of the Willing."

Drawn from a 1996 book, *Shock and Awe: Achieving Rapid Dominance*, by Harlan Ullman and James Wade, this chilling military strategy rests on the notion of overwhelming military force; an assault so devastating that soldiers "would be unable or unwilling to fight," and the population would be destroyed "physically, emotionally, and psychologically."

In a recent report from *The London Guardian*, Ullman edged away from his notorious reputation as the father of "shock and awe," lamenting the current representation of his thesis and expressing disagreement with the Bush administration's approach to the war. The use of the phrase by U.S. military officials has created a "Doomsday approach – the idea of terrorizing everybody," he said.

Although the reality of the initial Baghdad bombings was less ferocious than initially forecasted, the strategy remains firmly rooted in a bloody history. During the Spanish Civil war, the Nazis destroyed Guernica, itself a target of little military value, in an effort to break the spirit of the Basque resistance, and the U.S. decimated Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a demonstration of military might.

Shock and awe have even been traced back to the 5th-century B.C. Chinese warrior-philosopher Sun-tzu, author of one of the history's most influential military handbooks, *The Art of War*.

Although little is known of Sun-tzu's life, it is rumored that after he was challenged to transform the emperor's 180 concubines into an army, he brought two of the women in front of the group and ordered them to discipline the rest. When his commands were met with laughter, Sun-tzu promptly beheaded the two, shocking the others into submission.

Such is the "liberation" that awaits the Iraqis.

ARMY OF NONE: YOUNG MARINE REFUSES TO KILL

BY DUNCAN CAMBELL

LOS ANGELES—The first American conscientious deserter from the Iraq war gave himself up at a marine base in San Jose, California on April 1.

Stephen Eagle Funk, 20, a marine reserve who was due to be sent for combat duty, was on "unauthorized absence" from his unit. He said he believed the war was "immoral because of the deception involved by our leaders."

"I know I have to be punished for going UA," Funk said before surrendering to authorities, "but I would rather take my punishment now than live with what I would have to do [in Iraq] for the rest of my life. I would be going in knowing that it was wrong and that would be hypocritical."

Funk said he was approached by a recruiting officer last year.

"I wanted to belong and I wanted another direction in my life, and this seemed to offer it," said Mr Funk, who is being counselled by conscientious objectors from the 1991 Gulf war. "They told me I would be able to go back to school [university]." Recruits have their college fees paid once they complete their service.

"The ads make the armed forces look so cool – 'Call this number and we'll send you a free pair of boxer shorts' – and a lot of kids don't realize what's involved," he said. Mr Funk said he had started to have doubts about military service during his training.

"Every day in combat training you had to yell out 'Kill! Kill!' and we would get into trouble if you didn't shout it out, so often I would just mouth it so I didn't get into trouble." The recruits were also encouraged to hurt each other during hand-to-hand combat training. "I couldn't do that so they

would pair me up with someone who was very violent or aggressive."

He said many recruits were envious of those who were being sent to the Gulf. "They would say things like, 'Kill a raghead for me – I'm so jealous.'"

As a Catholic he eventually decided to take his concerns to the chaplain. "He said, 'It's a lot easier if you just give in and don't question authority.' He quoted the Bible at me and said, 'Jesus says to carry a sword.'"

"But I don't think Jesus was a violent man – in fact, the opposite – and I don't think God takes sides in war."

At shooting practice, although he scored well, the instructor told him he had an attitude problem: "I was a little pissed off and I said, 'I think killing people is wrong.' That was the crystallizing moment because I had never said it out loud before. It was such a relief."

He became concerned about the reasons for the conflict in Iraq. "This war is very immoral because of the deception involved by our leaders. It is very hypocritical."

"War is about destruction and violence and death. It is young men fighting old men's wars. It is not the answer, it just ravages the land of the battleground. I know it's wrong but other people in the military have been programmed to think it is OK."

Funk said he had gone public to try to dissuade other young people who had not thought through their reasons for joining the forces. "All they [the military] want is numbers. What I'm doing is really trying to educate people to weigh their options – there are so many more ways to get money for school."

Excerpted from
The London Guardian

LET THE LOOT

Iraq, the birthplace of civilization, has seen its heritage decimated

BY KRISTEN MCLEOD-BALL

Karbala. Najaf. Basra. Just weeks ago, these Iraqi cities were unknown to most Americans. Now, they're settings for bloody combat between U.S.-led forces and Iraqis. Hundreds of innocent civilians have reportedly been killed and wounded in the fighting, and hundreds of thousands of others are facing a humanitarian crisis as U.S. and British forces lay siege to these cities.

Yet another crisis is also looming, one that is receiving scant attention. The invasion of Iraq is putting at risk some of the world's most important archaeological sites in the birthplace of human civilization.

Over 5,000 years ago, the region that would become Iraq was home to the Sumerian society, where the first examples of writing, codes of law and cities developed. Archaeologists have already found 10,000 sites where remains of this ancient civilization's life still stand – and it is believed that thousands of other sites remain undiscovered.

Iraq's wealth of historical culture does not stop there; during the Middle Ages, the region was home to blossoming Islamic soci-

eties whose mosques, tombs, and shrines still grace Baghdad. Najaf and Karbala are holy cities for the Shia branch of Islam and contain some of the religion's most sacred shrines. Basra, meanwhile, houses early Islamic mosques and is 50 miles south of Al Qurna, said to be the site of the Garden of Eden.

War threatens the remains of these civilizations and, with them, the chance to explore the roots of modern society. While international conventions and Iraqi law attempt to protect the nation's cultural property, it remains to be seen what toll war, looting, and a U.S. occupation will take on ancient sites.

BOMBING ANTIQUITIES

The first challenge for Iraq's antiquities will be surviving the war itself. The 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (which the U.S. has not ratified) outlaws attacking cultural monuments unless they are located in or next to military targets. During the first Gulf War, the military says it planned targeting to avoid most important historical sites. However, several locations still sustained damage. Two notable examples were the ziggurat at Ur, which was repeatedly hit by machine gun fire, and the Great Arch at Ctesiphon, which cracked due to nearby bombing. Also, underground sites, such as Tell Lahm, were damaged when troops dug trenches into the desert.

Perhaps to prevent such incidents during this war, the Pentagon has invited leading archaeologists to identify the locations of ancient ruins. Duke University professor Scott Silliman, who served as an Air Force lawyer planning target sites during Operation Desert Storm, believes the United States will again do its best to protect cultural monuments.

"We not only have greater and more precise technology which will be employed in the targeting process, but we also have much more intelligence information on the location of those sites protected under international law," Silliman explains.

Others are not as convinced. John Russell, an archaeologist and professor at Massachusetts College of Art, says that based on the experience of the 1991 war, there is "considerable risk to standing buildings due to bombing and considerable risk to buried sites due to military trenching."

One concern is the sheer number of sites.



BAGHDAD: The former Mustansiriya university, 12th century PHOTO: DANIEL GRÜNBERG

The Pentagon accepted a list of 5,000 locations, but some archaeologists contend that the country may contain more than 100,000 sites in all. In fact, since southern Iraq is located in an alluvial plain, every visible hill is actually the mound of an ancient settlement.

According to University of Chicago professor and archaeologist McGuire Gibson, "The mounds occur in the thousands. If you stand on any mound in southern Iraq, you can count five to ten other mounds in the neighborhood."

POST-WAR PROBLEMS

The end of the conflict, however, may just be the start of the danger to the ruins and artifacts. In 1991, the vast majority of damage was a result of post-war looting. During the period of intense civil unrest following Iraq's defeat, more than 3,000 objects were stolen from regional museums.

Poverty brought on by sanctions compounded the problem. The Iraqi antiquities department, which had been first class, could no longer afford to pay archaeologists, curators or guards. Iraqis began to loot neglected dig sites and unexplored ancient settlements, carrying off wall reliefs, statues, and clay tablets. This was motivated by the knowledge that collectors in the West pay millions of dollars for certain artifacts and often do not seek to verify the legality of their removal. Now the question lingers: Will the U.S. post-war occupying force concern itself with preventing a repeat of this destruction?

After the first Gulf War, Iraq requested that the U.N. Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) investigate war-related damage and post-war looting. However, the United States, along with the U.K., blocked such an inquiry through the Security Council. To this day, there has yet to be an independent investigation into

the losses suffered by Iraq.

The U.S. record in Afghanistan, where very little money has been provided for the protection of antiquities, adds to the doubts. Professor Russell says the situation in that country is "not encouraging," since "the U.S. has left cultural assistance entirely up to other countries."

However, some believe that there will be a more concerted effort at protection following this war. Professor Gibson says, "The U.S. government is aware of the problem and will, I presume, take responsibility for protecting the sites from further pillaging and smuggling out of antiquities."

Groups are already meeting with the Defense and State departments to ensure a functioning antiquities department within Iraq after the war. The American Council for Cultural Policy (ACCP) is in the forefront of this effort and has offered help in rebuilding the necessary institutions. It remains to be seen whether this assistance will materialize following the war and what form it will take.

CONCERNED OR CASHING IN?

Not everyone trusts the ACCP – there is concern the group, whose members are major collectors and curators, might try to change Iraq's antiquities policy for its own benefit. Their contact with the State Department, which is planning to form a working group on antiquities and heritage in



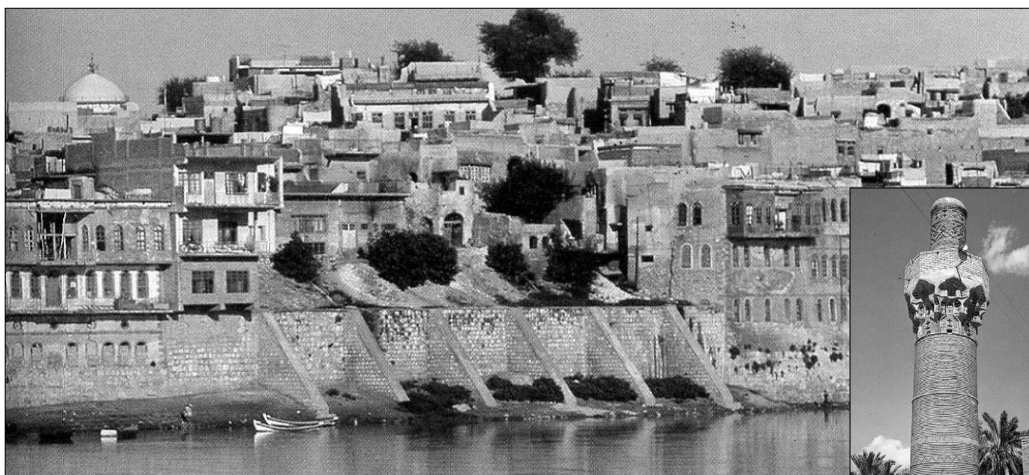
BAGHDAD: Damaged in the first Gulf War, this mosque has the architectural significance of European cathedrals.

PHOTO: DANIEL GRÜNBERG



BASRA: A traditional house in Basra.

PHOTO: © IRAQI STATE ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY



MOSUL: View of Mosul from the Tigris. PHOTO: © IRAQI MINISTRY OF INFORMATION 1977 Inset: Imam Yahya Abul Qasim in Mosul. PHOTO: © IRAQI STATE ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY



UR: Monument, and royal tomb entrance. PHOTO:

...TING BEGIN

ted over the past 12 years. Now, things could get much worse.

Iraq, could certainly give them a chance to influence post-war policy.

While the ACCP maintains that such claims are absurd, individual members have suggested that a post-war Iraq ought to liberalize certain laws – allowing more dig permits for foreigners and the export of some artifacts. According to *Science*, the group's treasurer, William Pearlstein, says that Iraq should allow "some objects [to be] certified for export" and that his group should seek to "influence conservation of cultural heritage [with the State Department]."

Currently, Iraq maintains that all antiquities, both above and below the ground, are property of the Iraqi people. This policy was instituted as a direct result of the immense number of artifacts removed to European museums during the reign of the Ottoman Empire. Yet Iraq's laws could be a target for free-trade-loving globalizers. In an age when "trade barriers" are dirty words, laws protecting cultural heritage may be seen as unnecessary protection of a product from the forces of free market economics – and their nullification simply part of economic liberalization.

Many archaeologists feel that Iraq's current policy is the best option for its cultural property, and they will judge the actions of the U.S. government and its advisors accordingly. "Just how [State Department policy] is implemented – whether as beneficial support for the existing antiquities authority in Iraq, or as

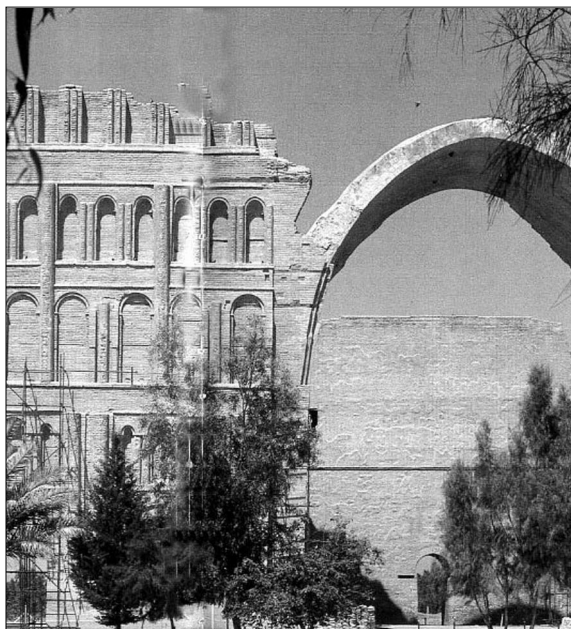
a neo-colonial rewriting of Iraqi laws to benefit the Western market – will be crucial," says Professor Russell.

"In the opinion of archaeologists, the most destructive thing the U.S. could do for Iraqi archaeology in a hypothetical post-war scenario would be to try to take over the operation of the antiquities department or to change Iraq's state-of-the-art antiquities policies. The most constructive thing would be to ask the department what it needs and then make sure they get it."



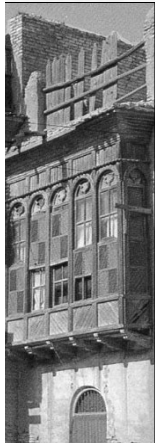
BAGHDAD: Front portal of the 12th-century Abbasid castle, on the bank of the Tigris River.

PHOTO: DANIEL GRÜNBERG



CTESIPHON: The fourth-century arch at Ctesiphon. During the first Gulf War the arch cracked due to force of nearby U.S. bombing.

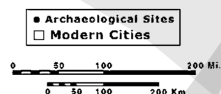
PHOTO: © IRAQI MINISTRY OF INFORMATION 1977



Wealth of history at risk

Karbala: This city is the home the shrine to Imam Al-Hussein. Hussein, grandson of the prophet Mohammed, was martyred as he fought to become the leader of Muslims over 1,300 years ago. It is one of the most sacred sites in Iraq for Shia Muslims and a destination for millions of pilgrims.

IRAQ



Najaf: Another site of religious pilgrimage, Najaf is known as a center of instruction in the Islamic world. The city contains a golden-domed shrine to Ali Ibn Abi Talib, cousin to the prophet Mohammed. It is thought to have been built and rebuilt repeatedly in the 10th, 11th, and 15th centuries.

Ctesiphon: This city, 20 miles south of Baghdad, was once the winter residence of kings in the Parthian empire. It is known for the partial remains of a Sassanian palace—one wall and an enormous arch are still standing. At 85 feet long, the single-span brick arch is the largest of its kind in the world. It developed cracks due to the vibrations of nearby bombs during the first Gulf War.

Ur of the Chaldees: An ancient settlement originally excavated in the 1920s, Ur is known as the birthplace of Abraham. The site includes a royal tomb, filled with artifacts including many gold pieces, and a large temple. During the 1991 Gulf War, the temple's ziggurat, a terraced pyramid tower, sustained damage from machinegun fire, and bombs left four craters in the surrounding area.

Basra: The second largest city in Iraq, Basra has several very early Islamic shrines. Also, 50 miles north is Al Qurna, believed by some to be the site of the Garden of Eden, where "Adam's tree" still stands.

MICHAEL MOORE'S REPUBLIC OF FEAR

Bowling for Columbine and the New American Foreign Policy

BY CHRIS ANDERSON

At the conclusion of a recent midtown screening of Michael Moore's documentary *Bowling for Columbine*, the crowded theater spontaneously erupted into prolonged applause. Two weeks later, the film won a Writers Guild award for best screenplay and, on March 23, it garnered an Oscar for Best Documentary. While it was Moore's impassioned anti-war acceptance speech that made the headlines, the award was a clear affirmation of the film's artistic quality. What is less certain, however, is whether those showering praise on *Bowling for Columbine* understand its true intentions.

According to most reviews, *Bowling for Columbine* examines the roots of America's gun culture by recounting the events that led two Colorado teenagers, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, to gun down twelve classmates at Columbine High School. It isn't surprising that liberal audiences from New York to Los Angeles appreciate a film about the need for gun control. Except, that's not what the movie is really about. Rather, it is a film that ponders the impact of fear on this nation's often-brutal domestic and foreign policies.

"Why are people scared?" Michael Moore asks midway through the film. This complex question, rather than the simpler one about whether "guns kill people or people kill people," is the true center of the movie. *Bowling for Columbine* goes beyond the standard liberal clichés about domestic American violence, striking

directly at the heart of our nation's equally violent foreign policy—a policy that, since September 11, Moore argues, is increasingly driven by fear.

Nowhere has this fear-driven outlook been more obvious than in the Bush Administration's relentless push for pre-emptive war against Iraq. The shadow of September 11 hangs like a cloud over the President's increasingly Manichean pronouncements about events in the world. "Instead of drifting along toward tragedy, we will set a course toward safety," Bush said in his nationally televised speech on March 17. "Before the day of horror can come, before it is too late to act, this danger will be removed."

At the same time, our fearless leaders in the Department of Homeland Security created a new website, www.ready.gov, which ominously declares that "terrorists are working to obtain biological, chemical, nuclear and radiological weapons, and the threat of an attack is very real."

In this light, the immense popularity of *Bowling for Columbine* makes sense—especially in New York. A film that analyzes our dread, extrapolates it, turns it upside down and pokes at it from all angles, is bound to resonate. We are, after all, a city that has been on perpetual "Orange Alert" for almost a year and a half. New Yorkers, more than other Americans, have a uniquely personal sense of both the fear of terrorism that animates current U.S. foreign policy, and the "blowback" that this foreign policy seems bound to create.

In a March 17 column on



WWW.READY.GOV

Workingforchange.com, Paul Loeb argues that "given how continually Bush plays the fear card, [the anti-war movement] might acknowledge that Americans have some reasons for fear. And then make clear that reckless zealotry and a willingness to make entire populations expendable does nothing to bring real security."

Loeb is right, as far as he goes. Apart from the occasional artist or director like Moore, the anti-war movement has done a poor job examining the real reasons for the popularity behind Bush's hawkish and overtly soothing stance. Fear drives the Bush agenda, and it is only by acknowledging the real fear felt by ordinary Americans that a long-term opposition to that agenda can take root.

At the same time, though, those in the global justice movement cannot and must not lose sight of the need to go beyond an agenda of fear. It has always been an agenda of hope—the very antithesis of the so-called Bush doctrine—that has motivated the protesters, journalists, activists and ordinary people who have taken to the streets to protest the policies of the IMF and World Bank over the past four years.

It is this hope that sets apart the global justice movement from both a largely disillusioned sixties generation and cynical right-wingers like Pat Buchanan and David Duke who echo some of their arguments but replace their generosity with jingoism and paranoia.

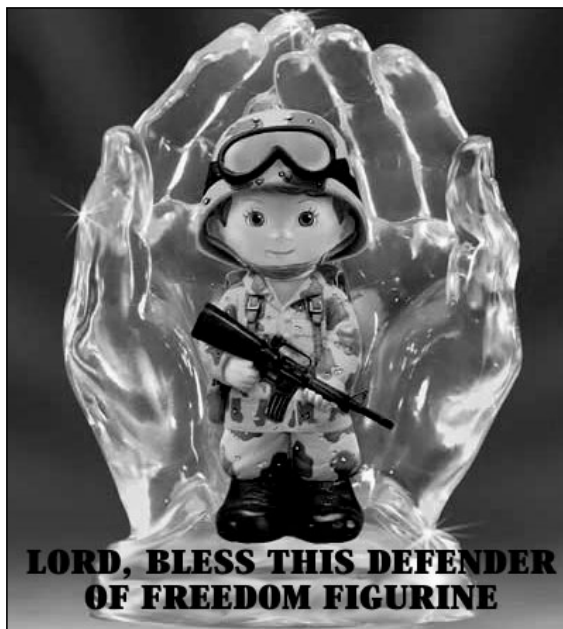
In this sense, it is fitting that the movement's most significant contribution to the flood of post-September 11 literature is a slender volume, with the black outline of the World Trade Center framed in blue, entitled *Another World is Possible*. In the bleak days of terrorism, war, and fear that lie ahead, this belief in another world cannot be allowed to disappear. A politics of possibility must remain alive to challenge our very own, homegrown, American republic of fear.

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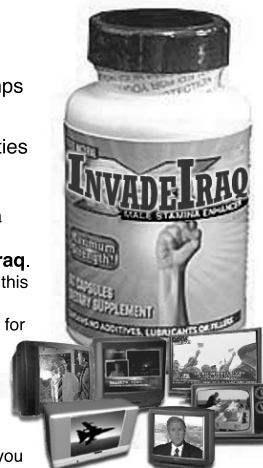
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by Steve Wishnia

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

New-Age Grocery Giants Nix Workers' Rights

BY TONY PECINOVSKY

What do the well-known organic grocery stores Whole Foods and Wild Oats have in common? A commitment to the environment? Devotion to the community?

On their website, Wild Oats says they are "planting the seeds that will support our communities, employees and the environment for generations to come."

Once every three months each Wild Oats store donates five percent of its total pre-tax sales for the day to a community non-profit group, and Whole Foods, the worlds largest retailer of natural and organic foods, contributes at least five percent of total net profits to not-for-profit organizations.

It seems that these socially and environmentally conscious grocery stores can provide customers with healthy, non-genetically modified foods, support the community and the environment and still make a profit.

But wait a minute. Another question remains to be answered. Consider the issue of workers rights; the right to organize a union and bargain collectively, an important consideration for the thousands of people across the country employed by these grocery stores.

Workers' rights have been recognized for some time, but not by John Mackey, CEO and founder of Whole Foods. "A union is like having herpes. It doesn't kill you, but it's unpleasant and inconvenient and it stops a lot of people from becoming your lover," said Mackey.

Patrick Parcell, director of organizing for UFCW Local 1500, is currently involved in a Whole Foods organizing campaign here in New York. "You have to appreciate the hypocrisy. Whole Foods presents a false image. They've created an environment that seems leftwing and progressive. But Whole Foods is far to the right when it comes to workers' rights." Currently there is only one unionized Whole Foods grocery store in the country, located in Madison, Wisconsin.

And Wild Oats isn't any better. Brian Petronella, president of the UFCW Local 371, says Wild Oats "will go to any extent, just like Wal-Mart, to stop people from organizing into a union."

Local 371 successfully organized the first and only Wild Oats-



owned health-food store, "Food For Thought," in 2001. But shortly after the campaign succeeded, Wild Oats sold the store and opened a new non-union grocery store "within throwing distance of Food for Thought," said Petronella.

During the campaign, Wild Oats was charged with harassing, coercively interrogating and surveilling employees. The store also threatened a reduction in hours, loss of benefits and store closure if the employees voted for a union.

Nationally, union workers earn 28 percent more on average than non-union workers and are significantly more likely to receive healthcare and pension benefits.

According to Parcell, "full-time Whole Foods workers pay \$250 dollars a month for healthcare." In addition, "employers in union grocery stores in New York pay the freight, dental, vision and family coverage."

As Parcell points out: "Whole Foods provides healthy food. But not health."

Whole Foods and Wild Oats promote themselves as environmentally conscious, progressive companies, dedicated to creating and fostering workplace environments where "team members" can "make their own decisions." And it has paid off. In 2002 Whole Foods reported sales of \$2.27 billion and profits of \$67.9 million.

It seems this window-dressing is nothing more than a clever and insidious way to tap into a niche market.

Currently the UFCW is asking members and supporters not to patronize Whole Foods and Wild Oats.

'A union is like having herpes. It doesn't kill you, but it's unpleasant and inconvenient and it stops a lot of people from becoming your lover.'

- John Mackay, CEO, Whole Foods

In the natural foods retailing business, "there's only room for one category killer here and that is Whole Foods," says Richard Hastings of Global Credit Services. Here's a breakdown of Whole Foods and its next closest competitor, Wild Oats.

WHOLE FOODS	WILD OATS:
FOUNDED: 1980	FOUNDED: 1987
HEADQUARTERS: AUSTIN, TEXAS	HEADQUARTERS: DENVER, COLORADO
2002 ANNUAL REVENUES: \$2.27 BILLION	2002 ANNUAL REVENUES: \$919 MILLION
2002 ANNUAL PROFIT: \$67.9 MILLION	2002 ANNUAL PROFITS: \$6.9 MILLION
NUMBER OF STORES: 143 THROUGHOUT THE U.S.	NUMBER OF STORES: 100 IN 29 STATES AND BRITISH COLUMBIA.

BY PANDI HOPKINS

NATIONAL BRIEFS

SENATE SAYS VOTERS PAY, NOT POLLUTERS

On March 25, the Senate voted against restoring a Superfund provision to force polluters to pay fees for cleanups. Some of the most frequent and infamous polluters, like General Electric, Dupont and General Motors, will instead pass the bill along to taxpayers. One-fourth of U.S. citizens live within four miles of a Superfund site, the most polluted areas among the nation's 600,000 toxic waste sites. New Jersey and New York have the most sites that will be potentially affected by lack of resources. According to this year's budget, the Bush administration will have taxpayers pay for 79 percent of the Superfund program's costs, and yet the program will remain underfunded by about \$1 to \$1.4 billion per year.

FEDS: ENRON IMPLICATED IN CALIFORNIA ENERGY CRISIS

Enron and other leading energy companies instigated the 2000-2001 energy crisis that cost California residents billions of dollars and caused widespread rolling blackouts, according to a recently released report from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). FERC concluded that Enron's trading strategies, along with 37 other energy companies, violated the anti-gaming provisions of their FERC-approved tariffs for the California markets. Among the 37 companies investigated for their connection to the manipulation of the California energy market are AEP, BP, Duke, Dynegy, El Paso, Enron, Mirant, Morgan Stanley, Reliant, Sempra and Williams. FERC will consider beginning proceedings to require companies to hand over profits linked with these tariff violations. Watchdog groups say they will monitor carefully the FERC's actions to penalize the companies as they are skeptical of the regulatory body's commitment.

MAY DEPARTMENT STORES CLOSE DOOR ON BURMA

May Department Stores, the owner of 14 chains including Foley's, Lord & Taylor, Hechts, Strawbridges, Robinsons-May, and David's Bridal, recently stated that it will no longer sell products made in Burma. Due to the country's history of forced labor, particularly within the garment industry, the Free Burma Coalition and a number of other groups boycotted May Department stores for carrying "Made in Burma" clothing. So many retailers, such as Saks, Wal-Mart, Costco, Tommy Hilfiger, Filia, Hanes, The Spiegel Group, and Jones Apparel, have joined in the decision to ban Burmese products that U.S. imports have dropped by 27 percent, from \$411 to \$303 million dollars, between 2001 and 2002.

WHEN BUSH COMES TO SHOVE... WHERE DO YOU TURN FOR NEWS?

Naomi Klein says *The Independent* "mixes the spirit of direct action with a searing critique of corporate power." Drawing upon the global network of Indymedia Centers, we let people speak for themselves — from the streets of Baghdad to the jungles of Colombia, the shantytowns of South Africa to the villages of East Timor. We look at those resisting the Pentagon and Wall Street reign of terror, from the fight at home for housing, quality education and civil liberties to the broader struggle against corporate globalization. Don't miss an issue—**subscribe today!**

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BUDGET CUTS ROCK CUNY

BY SASHA NEVSKAYA

Six billion dollars in loans and aid to Turkey for use of its airspace, \$2 billion to Israel, and just shy of \$5 million to tighten security in New York City. These were some of the disbursements resulting from the war. Meanwhile, \$1.6 billion is being slashed from the New York City public school budget.

To some parties, such as the City College Coalition for Peace, these events are connected.

That's why the group held a rally the day the war began, March 20, to demand not just a halt to the invasion of Iraq, but a freeze on upcoming tuition hikes. More than 100 students and faculty members gathered in the City College North Academic Center Rotunda to listen to some 15 speakers.

Hank Williams, a representative from the Student Liberation and Action Movement, set the pace for the rally by calling the Bush administration a bunch of "gangsters and thugs." Faculty members advised students to take action and organize against the war. City College's proud history of rebellion was also emphasized: in 1969 thousands of students kept the college's South Campus occupied for weeks, forced the resignation of the college president and ended his policy of segregation.

At 2 p.m., students and faculty moved the rally to the grounds of the tightly secured administrative building. The group had a petition signed by hundreds of City College students that demanded an end to the war on Iraq and sanctions, a halt to attacks on immigrants and civil liberties, and no tuition increase. "All we want is [the] position of our administration on the key issues of the day," said the rally's MC Lydia Shestopalova.

Yet City College President Greg Williams did not acknowledge the students. In fact, even faculty members were denied passage to the administration building by security guards. Soaked by the spring rain the crowd chanted: "We are cold, we are wet, President Williams we are not done with you yet."

City College, founded in 1847 as a Free Academy, is the oldest of 20 CUNY institutions. Tuition was first imposed in 1976. Nonetheless, City College takes pride in its quality academic environment that gave the world Nobel Laureates, Pulitzer Prize and Emmy Award winners, and, ironically, Colin L. Powell. So while the Secretary of State was busy presenting "evidence" for war to the international community, his alma mater stood firm against an upcoming 38 percent increase in tuition.

The war continues, but so does the student activity for peace on campuses across the country. The protest was no ordinary one at City College. It was a day when opinion was voiced on the grounds of one of the most renowned public institutions in the city — and it is yet to be silenced.

"Raising tuition and cutting grants is cruel to all those students who want a future and who want to get out of this miserable life of poverty. Why can't the government, the mayor, and the president think about us for a change? The U.S. is in the middle of starting a war and already they want to take away our most precious thing, our education. The world might just end tomorrow and then again it might not if 'they' would give us a chance for us to be educated about the formation of life, science, history and much more."

— Gleiry Diaz,
student at New York Tech College



NYU: About 100 NYU students take over the Kimmel Center for University Life on March 27 after staging a walkout in Washington Square Park. PHOTO: VANESSA HRADSKY

Students Demand Books Not Bombs

BY TONY PECINOVSKY

When asked why students are protesting the war on Iraq, Jessie Marshall of the Young Communist League and National Youth and Student Peace Coalition, says it's because politicians are "not sending the sons and daughters of rich people over to Iraq. They're sending that kid from down the street, the one who was trying to get an education."

Locally and nationally, youth and student peace organizations are trying to sort out the complex issues of how to oppose the war in a super-charged atmosphere of patriotism. They say they oppose this unjust war in part because it's fought predominantly by working class youth and youth of color who are enticed by military recruiters offering money for college and a way out of poverty.

Karim Lopez, an organizer for Up Town Peace and Justice, says the "poverty draft is the economic pressure that forces young people of color to join the army."

Portia Pedro, director of organizing for the United States Student Association (USSA), adds "working class young people are the majority of the ones doing the fighting."

USSA, the oldest and largest student organization in the country, with affiliates

on hundreds of campuses, sees a direct link between the war abroad and the tuition hikes at home. "When money goes to one place, it has to be taken from another," said Pedro. "This war isn't about democracy, it's about money."

Nationally, tuition is rising, class sizes are increasing, financial aid is being cut and there are fewer and fewer jobs for youth at living wages.

Erica Smiley, national coordinator of the Black Radical Congress Youth Division, said, "We're not only being asked to sacrifice our lives. We're being asked to sacrifice our education and our jobs."

While in the past few months hundreds of thousands of youth have participated in mass national protests, many have also voiced their opposition to the war on Iraq on a local level.

Many youth have put candles in their windows, held vigils and organized campus teach-ins. Perhaps one of the most effective actions organized entirely by youth and students was the March 5th Books Not Bombs student strike.

One of the nearly 400 participating campuses was Stanford University. Clara Webb, a senior at Stanford, and a member of the Stanford Committee for Peace and Justice (SCPJ), told strike participants that

"federal money, financial aid, after-school programs and health services are all being cut out of state budgets so that Bush can pay for his war."

On March 5 the SCPJ, representing about 30 endorsing organizations, mobilized close to 1,000 students to go on strike. The striking students rallied in the quad, held workshops, wrote letters to congressional representatives and held cultural events throughout the day. Over 60 faculty members endorsed the strike, and around 30 cancelled classes.

The March 5th action was an example of how national and local youth and student peace organizations have been coordinating material, information, training and support.

Internationally, "we have to look at the root causes of what is making people so angry at us: our trade policy, robbing natural resources, enslaving the work force in terrible conditions," said Smiley.

"We have to recognize that this war is one front of a broader, larger effort to impose U.S. economic domination over the world," said Karim Lopez. "The only way out of this conflict is to continue to make the link between the war abroad and war at home, to connect the issues, to mobilize."

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PHOTO: RED ASKEY

National Day of Mass Nonviolent Direct Action to

STOP THE WAR

at Home and in Iraq

• Monday April 7th, 2003 •

Targeting war profiteer: The Carlyle Group, 58th Street & 5th Avenue during morning rush hour

see www.m27coalition.org for the latest plan in NYC

www.ActAgainstWar.org

photo by David Hanks/UC

DYING FOR PEACE

ALT MEDIA LIFTS FOG OF WAR

By CHRIS ANDERSON

Looking for substance over style? Here are some of the places to go for independent perspectives on the war.

Iraq Peace Team:

Daily Diaries www.iraqpeaceteam.org
From Western peace activists living in Baghdad. Additional news in this vein, available in multiple languages, can be read at Peace Race Baghdad: www.peacerace.be.

Robert Fisk

This veteran Middle East correspondent is filing almost daily dispatches from Baghdad for the London Independent: www.independent.co.uk. An unbelievably brave journalist, an amazing writer and an opponent of the war, he's also under no illusions about the nature of Saddam Hussein's regime. His writings can be found at www.independent.co.uk

Al-Jazeera

Under frequent hacker attack since the start of the Second Gulf War, Al-Jazeera Online at english.aljazeera.net has nonetheless finally arrived on the web in English. Find out what's being reported by the 'CNN of the Arab World' and consequently, what most of that world thinks about the war.

The Palestine Chronicle

palestinechronicle.com provides news and commentary from Palestine, Iraq and beyond.

Ha'aretz

This mainstream Israeli daily with a left-of-center editorial perspective can be found at www.haaretzdaily.com.

What do the Russians think?

The IRAQWAR.RU at www.aeronautics.ru is an analytical center recently created by a group of Russian journalists and military experts to provide accurate and up-to-date news and analysis of the war against Iraq.

IRIB News

Reporting and analysis from the other member of the 'axis of evil' in the Middle East, Iran can be found at www.iribnews.com.

Anti-war.com

A large anti-war portal with libertarian leanings.

Buzzflash.com

A clearinghouse for progressive information and interesting articles.

Democracy Now!

War and Peace Report: Monday-Friday from 9-10am on WBAI 99.5FM. Website is located at democracynow.org.

Indymedia.org

For news about the worldwide movement to stop the war, Indymedia is the place to go.

Iraqbodycount.net

The U.S. Central Command doesn't do body counts, but Iraq Body Count does. Independent source for reported civilian deaths in the war on Iraq.



FIFTH AVE: Protesters lie down in the street on March 27 bringing a halt to rush hour traffic. PHOTO: ERIC BERTUCCIO

By VANESSA HRADSKY

On Thursday, March 27, I was sent on assignment to cover the citywide civil disobedience planned in protest of the war on Iraq. So I grabbed my camera and walking shoes, and headed for adventure.

The events started early, with a "die-in" organized by the M27 Coalition at about 8:30 a.m. on Fifth Avenue, in front of Rockefeller Center. About 400 people gathered, with 170 of them lying down in the street, acting as war victims and blocking traffic. Some had pictures of dead Iraqis with a caption that read, "Your silence is killing us." The actions were intended to draw public attention to what protesters say is biased media coverage of the war, fueled by corporate interests.

Some 200 people were arrested for "disorderly conduct," including all of the die-in participants. Some of the arrests came as a result of plainclothes police officers instigating provocations. Many protesters complained of aggressive verbal and physical treatment by the police.

As the die-in fizzled out, I followed clusters of protesters walking around midtown with signs reading, "No blood for oil" and chanting, "This is what democracy looks like." A couple of the protesters in the group were arrested for no apparent reason while waiting to cross a street.

Around noon everyone decided to regroup in Washington Square, so I headed south. When I got there, some 600 NYU students were staging a walkout, skipping class to march for peace. Various speakers discussed the problems of the war on Iraq, cheered on by about 200-300

students, while dozens of police officers paced around them. At about 2 p.m. the students took over the new student union building (the Kimmel Center for University Life) and 100 of them staged their own die-in in the lobby and main stairwell of the building. Luckily for them, the New York City cops surrounding the building (and photographing protesters) were not allowed access into the student union by NYU security. After waiting for about an hour, the police started to disperse.

Other sporadic events took place all around the city. Between 9 and 10 a.m., anti-war activists blockaded traffic at 28th Street and Broadway, at 26th Street and 6th Avenue, and at Prince and Broadway. The feminist anti-war group Code Pink entered Tiffany's on Fifth Avenue, walked through the store in protest, and then staged a die-in on the sidewalk outside. They "died" again at the fountain in front of the Plaza Hotel. Another 30 people marching on the sidewalk were surrounded and detained by police at 48th Street and 5th Avenue, and six protesters were arrested.

Organizers from the M27 Coalition and Code Pink reported that arrestees were held at One Police Plaza and denied access to legal counsel.

M27 was just the beginning. The M27 Coalition has put out a nationwide call for direct action targeting war profiteers on April 7. The New York contingent plans to protest at the offices of investment giant, the Carlyle Group, located at 58th Street and Fifth Avenue.

See www.m27coalition.org for details.



PHOTO: FRED ASKEW



**Left
PRO-WAR PRESENCE:**
Pro-war protester screaming at a woman quietly reading a declaration of non-violence.
PHOTO: VANESSA HRADSKY

**Right
NEW YORK CITY:**
March 22, 2003
PHOTO: FRED ASKEW



EL INDEPENDIENTE



No queremos asma, cáncer, ni la planta de energía eléctrica

Silvia Arana

Sunset Park, Brooklyn- La compañía Sunset Energy Fleet (SEF) reinicia planes para construir una planta eléctrica que incrementará la contaminación ambiental en esta área. La central eléctrica se construirá en la Tercera Avenida, en un área densamente poblada, multiétnica, con predominancia latina. Tendría el tamaño de tres estadios de fútbol, o más de 300 yardas. En el proceso de generar electricidad, la planta produciría por año unas 200 toneladas de partículas -PM 2.5- que causan asma, enfermedades respiratorias y cardiovasculares. Hoy en Sunset Park, la cantidad de partículas PM 2.5 en el aire ya es más alto que el permitido por EPA (Agencia de Protección Ambiental). Además, la planta producirá por año 134 toneladas de óxido de nitrógeno, que causa asma y enfermedades respiratorias y 153 toneladas de monóxido de carbono, que causa problemas cardíacos. Por incumplimiento de reglas ambientales, esta misma compañía fracasó hace dos años y medio en sus intentos de construir una planta eléctrica. En ese momento, los residentes y organizaciones como UPROSE (Unión de Organizaciones Puertorriqueñas de Sunset Park) se opusieron firmemente contra estos planes y lograron que el Consejo de Energía y Ambiente le negara el permiso a SEF.

Elizabeth Yeampierre, directora ejecutiva de la organización dice "la ciudad de New York está muy atrasada en términos ecológicos. En Sunset Park, por ejemplo, no hay vías verdes, que faciliten la circu-

lación de bicicletas. Sólo las hay en los sectores de mayor nivel económico. Los barrios de trabajadores e inmigrantes, tienen altos niveles de contaminación ambiental. Nosotros no nos oponemos al desarrollo industrial, lo que queremos es que se haga de manera limpia, que se produzca y use energía respetando el medioambiente."

Cristal Domenech, 17 años, miembro de Youth Justice, la rama juvenil de Uprose, dice "de la misma manera que el gobierno está haciendo una guerra por el petróleo para las corporaciones, aquí las autoridades están apoyando a una empresa en lugar de defender los derechos de la gente".

Los activistas de Youth Justice, según nos explicó Frank Torres, 20 años, están difundiendo datos importantes entre los residentes, para que la gente sepa cuáles serán las consecuencias en la salud de sus hijos y de ellos mismos si se construye otra planta eléctrica en el área.

A pesar de la oposición de los residentes y del reclamo de que toda reunión sea pública porque está en juego la salud de

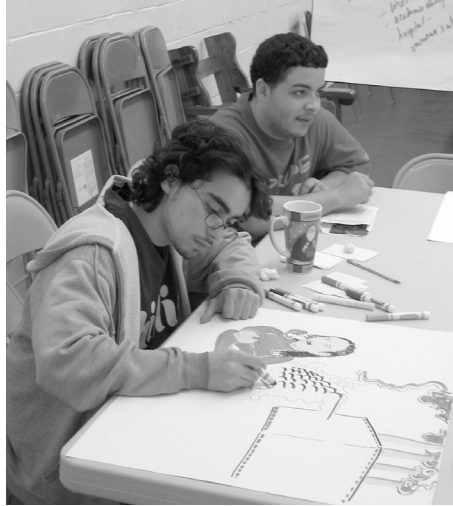


PHOTO: BILLY GILLS

los residentes, la concejal Sarah Gonzalez va a reunirse con Sunset Energy Fleet privadamente para reconsiderar la construcción de la planta eléctrica. Los residentes de Sunset Park protestarán en el sitio de la reunión, el jueves 3 de abril, a las 7:30 de la noche, en el Grand Prospect Hall, Avenida Prospect, entre avenidas Quinta y Sexta.

Los residentes le dicen no al asma, al cáncer y a Sunset Energy Fleet.

La invasión a Irak: En 24 horas –entre la noche del viernes y del sábado- murieron 140 personas en Irak, según el portavoz oficial iraquí. El bombardeo indiscriminado de Bagdad del fin de semana dejó 89 iraquíes muertos. La gran cantidad de civiles muertos y heridos le da un carácter genocida a esta invasión. Fuentes hospitalarias citadas por las agencias AFP y Reuters reportaron más de 50 muertos en el mercado Shula, el segundo en ser bombardeado esta semana.

Gran Bretaña admite que no puede tomar Basora, la segunda ciudad de Irak. Las fuerzas invasoras anunciaron erróneamente nueve veces que habían tomado esta ciudad. La población civil continúa resistiendo.

Este sábado, un ataque suicida causó la muerte de cuatro marines. El vicepresidente de Irak anunció que los ataques suicidas formarán parte esencial de la defensa iraquí contra los agresores imperialistas.

El secretario de Defensa estadounidense, Donald Rumsfeld, lanzó amenazas contra Siria e Irán para que no apoyen a Irak. En Teherán y en decenas de ciudades árabes y otros centros con importante población musulmana cientos de miles de personas clamaron por *jihad*, o guerra santa, contra Estados Unidos y Gran Bretaña.

El sábado hubo manifestaciones multitudinarias contra la invasión de Irak en Europa, Asia y América Latina:

En México, se realizó una protesta de escritores, profesores y estudiantes, en repudio a la hegemonía estadounidense.

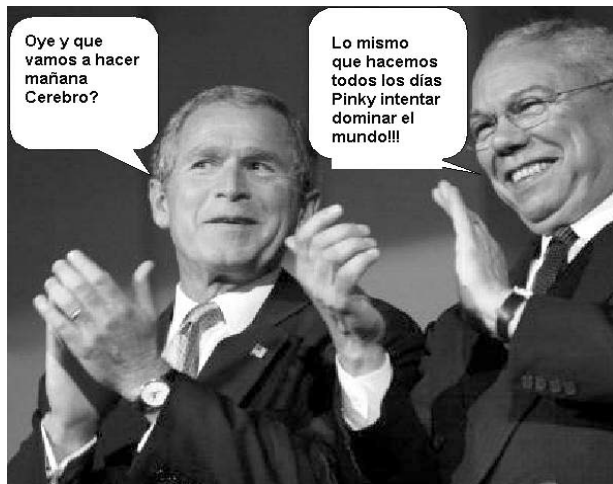
En Caracas, la capital venezolana, simpatizantes del presidente Hugo Chávez lanzaron globos blancos desde una plaza céntrica, por la paz en el mundo.

En Santo Domingo, capital de República Dominicana, las marchas concluyeron con incidentes con la policía, en los que varios manifestantes resultaron heridos.

También hubo protestas en las capitales de Chile, Uruguay y Argentina, que se sumaron a las manifestaciones en Ecuador, Perú y distintas partes de América Central del viernes por la noche.

Los colombianos protestaron el viernes: "No queremos y no nos da la gana de ser una colonia estadounidense, si queremos y si nos da la gana ser una Colombia libre y soberana". Con consignas como esta cientos de estudiantes universitarios de Bogotá repudiaron el apoyo que el presidente de Colombia, Álvaro Uribe Vélez, le ha dado a la invasión anglo-estadounidense a Irak. En el departamento del Cauca, cerca de cinco mil indígenas bloquearon una ruta en protesta por la guerra contra Irak.

Boicot a los productos norteamericanos e ingleses: A través de Indymedia Ecuador y otros sitios de internet se pide un boicot a los productos norteamericanos e ingleses para protestar por la agresión imperialista liderada por Bush y Blair con el fin de apropiarse de las reservas de petróleo de Irak. Proponen boicotear McDonald's, Burger Kings y otras cadenas de comida rápida y tomar agua, jugo, café o té en lugar de Coca Cola, Pepsi, Seven Up u otra bebida producida por una empresa de EE.UU. Piden que no se compren autos producidos por Ford, Chrysler, General Motors o Rover. La lista incluye desde alimentos hasta ropa.



Oye y que vamos a hacer mañana Cerebro?

Lo mismo que hacemos todos los días Pinky intentar dominar el mundo!!!

Desde las entrañas del monstruo

Martí y Hostos

Este es un año de conmemoración de dos luchadores por la libertad y la cultura de nuestra América: José Martí y Eugenio María de Hostos.

Hostos Community College (CUNY) presentará una serie de conferencias y actividades para celebrar el 150 aniversario del nacimiento del patriota y mártir cubano, José Martí (1853-1895) y el centenario de la muerte del filósofo y educador puertorriqueño, Eugenio María de Hostos (1839-1903).

Hace más de cien años, la presencia de Hostos y de Martí revitalizó la vida cultural y política de la emergente comunidad Latina de Nueva York. Ambos dejaron un legado cultural y político sin paralelos. Se imaginaria Martí que cien años después muchos de los inmigrantes, repetimos a menudo su frase "desde las entrañas del monstruo".

Las actividades culturales están centradas en el tema "Hostos & Martí: Vidas, obras y legados". La próxima conferencia, "Relevancia del pensamiento de Hostos y Martí en la América Latina contemporánea", tendrá lugar el jueves, 10 de abril, a las 7 de la tarde en el Repertory Theater, Hostos Community College. La entrada es gratis: llamar al 718-518-4455.

Si quieres colaborar en EL INDEPENDIENTE (escribir artículos, corregir pruebas, traducir, etc.), envía un email a:

imc-nyc-espanol@indymedia.org

o asiste a un de nuestras reuniones en

IMC (34 E 29th Street, piso 2) los martes a las 6:30.